



Abraham Lincoln Presidential Museum Experience Questionnaire

Assign no more than three questions per area to a student.

The Plaza

1. Who are the members of the Lincoln family standing in the Plaza? Which family member is missing and why?
2. How does the arrangement of the museum help to tell the tale of Lincoln's life?
3. The exhibit designers chose large symbolic structures to help tell the story of Lincoln life. What do these structures say to the visitor? Is it effective?
4. Who are the figures outside the White House and why might they want to see Lincoln?
5. Just for fun: Find the penny.

Journey One: The Pre-Presidential Years

1. What book is Lincoln reading while he is sitting on a fence? What later event involved this book?
2. What experiences in Lincoln's early life might have helped prepare him for the White House?
3. What kinds of challenges might come with living in a one-room cabin?
4. Why is Lincoln's journey to New Orleans important?
5. How does the slave auction exhibit make you feel? What impact might such a scene have had on Lincoln?
6. What events occurred in New Salem that led Lincoln to move to Springfield?
7. Do Lincoln and Mary Todd seem like a likely couple? Why or why not?
8. How did Lincoln earn a living in Springfield and how might this have helped prepare him for the White House?
9. What kind of parent was Lincoln? Give examples to support your answer.
10. "Popular Sovereignty" was a subject that Lincoln and Douglas debated in 1858. What is "popular sovereignty?"
11. How did Lincoln gain publicity all over the country from debates held in Illinois only?
12. How many presidential candidates were in the Presidential election of 1860 and what did each candidate support?
13. How does the 1860 election compare with current elections?

The Union Theater: "Lincoln's Eyes"

1. List some things that the artist sees in Lincoln's eyes.
2. What is the difference between Lincoln the man and Lincoln the legend?

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Journey Two: The Presidential Years

1. Who is helping Mary get dressed? What is her relationship to Mary Lincoln and why is it unusual?
2. Why is such a large room in the museum given to showcasing dresses? Whose dresses are they? What themes are explored in this space?
3. List some symbols in the political cartoons that portray Lincoln. What do they mean? Do they show Lincoln as good or bad?
4. How do some of the things being said about the Lincolns make you feel? Are you surprised by this exhibit? Does this happen to Presidents today?
5. Why are the Lincolns dressed in party clothes in the scene where Willie is sick? Some have called this scene ironic. Would you agree?
6. What are the servants talking about in the White House kitchen?
7. What do the Cabinet members think of Lincoln's announcement of the Emancipation Proclamation?
8. Describe reactions, both pro and con, to the Emancipation Proclamation.
9. How does the Emancipation Proclamation make it easier for black troops to fight in the war?
10. What is the total casualty number on the "Civil War in Four Minutes?" How does this presentation make you feel?
11. Choose one soldier from the "Eight Soldiers' Stories." Put yourself in that soldier's shoes. How does his story make you feel?
12. Were there any women soldiers in the war? What did they do? How did they dress?
13. How did Lincoln find out about casualty figures during the war? What was his reaction and how did the war affect him?
14. The North and South fought at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania for three days in July 1863. What else is Gettysburg famous for and why?
15. What good thing happened to Lincoln in 1864? Did it affect the war?
16. Why are the Lincolns smiling and happy at the theater? What does he say to her?
17. How did the public image of Lincoln change after his death? What were some ways the change was shown?

Treasures Gallery

1. Choose an artifact that you find interesting. Describe it and explain why it appeals to you.
2. Is it important that we preserve these artifacts? Why?
3. Why do we as a people build museums to showcase these objects?

"Ghosts of the Library"

1. How do the collections in the library reveal stories about our past?
2. Are there ghosts in the library? Explain your answer.